

# Red Flower of Life

POEMS

*by*

MINNIE HALLOWELL BOWEN



*Little Grey Book No. 2*

SHERBROOKE, QUE.



*Acknowledgments are due to The  
University Magazine and The  
Canadian Home Journal on the  
reproduction of certain poems ap-  
pearing in the issues of The Little  
Grey Book.*

*M.H.B.*

*"Rose"  
with love from  
Minnie H. Bowen.*

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## Red Flower of Life

Life's vision yet shall win its crowning hour!  
 O Flower of crimson bloom!—  
 It took the cycle of the changing year  
 To bring thee from the mould;  
 Grey days and gold  
 Went to thy velvet's making;  
 Hot sun—and cold,  
 The hours of drifting rain,  
 Yet found the utmost gain,  
 When, from the calyx gloom  
 Flamed the rich flower.

Why doubt the unconscious aim—the ultimate  
 goal?  
 Red Flower of my life's heart!—  
 Sheathed in the bud—to open as a star;—  
 The May's white ecstasy  
 Shall live in thee—  
 Though her swift feet have passed,  
 And thoughts of bliss to be  
 In Summer's slumber song  
 Poured her sweet aisles along—  
 Each rapture but a part  
 Of one great whole.

Though died the regal Autumn's vine-crowned  
 hour!  
 Red Flower of my life's bloom!—  
 Gold leaves—ripe fruit—and underneath, dead  
 dreams;—  
 Thou shalt bring back the gold,  
 The dreams of old,  
 The Winter's loveliness—  
 Her fallen stars acold,



The purity aglow  
Of the deep drifted snow—  
Life's memories from the tomb,  
O! Life's Red Flower!

Who dreamt such beauty lay in growth and  
    strife,  
    Thorn-wounds, the knife's keen smart?  
The crimson's in the flower—and that's above;—  
    For this the stem was fed,  
    That splendid red  
Awaits the blossoming,  
    And the last hour of dread  
    All tenderness shall keep,  
When God, in that long sleep  
Shall lay you on my heart,  
    Red Flower of Life!

<◇

## Lost Laughter

Her laughter bloomed along the air,  
Like daffodils in early spring  
That down brown vistas gaily bring  
Their yellow richness everywhere.

A golden thing!—A joy apart!—  
It lifted flowers above my snow,  
Like crocus buds that come and go,  
The coloured pulse of springtime's heart.

Those cups of gold and purple wine  
Have faded with the daffodils:—  
No music echoes in the hills,—  
No chalice waits for lips of mine.

With bitter rain that cup would fill  
If lifted to May's white despair! . . .  
Lost laughter blooms along the air  
And dances like a daffodil!

## The Garden

### *The Gateway*

Thou mayest enter the gate of the Garden  
By joy or by pain;  
Then, blind as before,  
And untouched by its grace,  
Not knowing the Gardener, leave it again  
Through thine own chosen door  
Of self-will,  
For wayside and hill;—  
Or coming, may find in this place,  
Life springs from the sod  
Of despair  
And the soul is aware  
Of itself and of God!  
Then, never again  
Would'st thou leave,  
(If thine eyes in this light  
See aright,)  
Though the spirit may grieve  
For lost fields and the ardent young quest  
When thy thought was the guest  
Of the stars and thy wings  
Swept the uttermost hills.  
It is well with the garden and thee!  
Here is peace and rich fragrance;  
Drink deep thirsty soul!  
Little drops were before—now the whole  
Is thine own and shall be:  
Thy lingering glance  
Holds beauty unmeasured that fills  
Thy heart, if it wills,  
And all things.

### *The Flowers*

There are flowers for remembrance a-plenty!



Blue, crimson and gold!  
Did'st think that tall lark's song of blue  
Was sorrow or pain?  
When the bees of your thought on its breast  
Found sweetness and rest  
With rich gain!  
Its ecstasy rises on high  
Like a flame—like a delicate spire  
Of flower wrought tracery, holy desire  
Uplifting pure petals; a bit of the sky  
So perfect in azure, so deep in blent hue,  
(With purple of violets sweet with regret,  
Young grief in the velvet of pansies, still wet)  
With teardrops for dew,—  
That thy spirit most surely must know  
Thou couldst not see heaven  
Unless these should grow!

Take the gold in its wonder!  
Yellow blossoms,—so common they seemed  
To sight that still slumbered!  
They fell by the way  
Unnoticed, unnumbered!  
Are they nearer the sun  
That they shine everyone  
Like home-fires alight,  
Or a star in the night?  
Little, everyday things  
Showing beauty the mind had not dreamed;—  
Kindly deeds growing wings.

Here are roses that show  
Like blood, with curled petals of crimson!  
Sweet perfume—pure form.  
What rapture of colour! Emotions that glow  
From loveliness opening like joy manifest;—  
Like heart beats in earth's breast,—  
Like life from the tomb.  
Through still days and storm,  
By sunshine and rain,  
They made gain,

That thine eyes might behold  
(Now freed from the gloom  
Of the long dusty road,  
Of the prick and the goad,)  
Such beauty arise from the mould.  
This red  
In its glory, is sign unto thee  
Of the blood that once shed  
Made this Garden to be!

Here's truth! Seen as never before,  
Grace visioned—now near.  
It is exquisite now, but of old  
Thy sight dulled it—now gladly behold.  
It is clear in the Garden,—  
At even most clear.

#### *At Even*

In the Garden at even  
The shadows grow heavy and long.  
The drowsy bird-song  
Falls like drops of clear water, through silence,  
To splash in the pool  
Of the air, still and cool.  
*God walks in the Garden!*  
O calm, darkening hours,  
When day's work is done  
And the westering sun  
Gives light that uplifts from beneath  
Every small growing thing,  
Till excellence breaks from its sheath  
To blossom and sing!

#### *Night*

*God walks in His Garden!*—  
And when night shall fall  
With the darkness and star beyond star,  
With peace near and far,  
With wonder and silence  
And mystery covering all,  
O soul!—Thou shalt not be affrighted.



These too, are God's flowers,  
Are sweetness and joy unimagined!  
The darkness is lighted  
From heaven, the still night is blest  
With love and deep rest.

*The Sundial*

Then fear not to enter the Garden  
By joy or by pain!  
The angel that guides, not in vain  
Leads thy steps to the gate.  
See, it opens in welcome,  
And sweet are the flowers! \* \* \* \*  
The hour grows late!

The sundial stands in lush grasses!  
No moment may wait!  
It marks them in sunshine by shadow:  
Use light, for it passes!  
Let the soul now arise  
And behold with clear eyes,  
See things as God sees,—  
For swift are the hours!  
Meet time on thy knees!—  
Remember, O soul,—in the Garden,  
God walks in the cool of the evening  
And looks on His flowers!

◁▷

Canadian Song Cycle

No. 1

*Snow-Stars*

Snow-stars are drifting slowly down—  
In Paradise they blow—  
The petals of immortal flowers,  
To fall to earth as snow.  
They bring its purity, they shine  
With memories of its light,  
And over all the saddened fields  
They weave its robe of white.

Why should I fear the resting place  
That holds the quiet Dead?  
I know that they shall calmly sleep  
With snow-stars over head.

No. 2

*The Arbutus*

Sweet flower that blossoms with the passing  
snows!  
What largess do you bring?  
The lovely ripple of the new born brooks  
Glad harbingers of Spring!  
The robin singing in the chilly groves,  
Young April's scented breath,  
The coming of the Angel that awakes  
New life from death.

No. 3

*Roses and Wine*

The crimson roses hang their heads  
To kiss the languid breeze  
That hardly moves the clover blooms,  
Or stirs the cedar trees,



And all the air is faint with heat,  
Yet quick with nature's wine—  
The love-thought of the full grown year,  
Both mortal and divine!

This wealth is ours to have and hold—  
Sweetheart—all change above!  
Then quaff with me the Wine of Life—  
And pluck the Rose of Love!

No. 4

*We Sleep to Wake*

The slanting sunlight coldly rests  
Upon the fallen gold,  
Where Autumn's russet leaves have paid  
Their tribute to the mould,  
And all the woodland soul exhales  
In every pungent breath  
Of scented incense that it burns  
Before the feet of Death.  
The year is dying,—and the light  
Fades with the flying hours!  
So passed the wonder of the fruit,  
The glory of the flowers.

What though the loveliness of life  
The dying year shall take!  
Heart of my Heart, be not afraid!  
For we shall sleep to wake!

◁▷

## St. Patrick's Day

There's a jewelled clasp that glitters in the girdle  
of the sea—  
It's a little group of islands far away;  
The ages carved those birthstones of an Empire  
that should be,  
But one is in all Irish thoughts to-day.  
For Scotland's like a pearl  
Where the fretting North Seas whirl,  
And England's like a ruby by her side,  
Wales' sapphire mountains smile,—  
But we toast the Emerald Isle—  
For Irish hearts are true hearts—the whole  
world wide!

There's a cabin on the hillside, you can see it  
through the mist,  
Where we left the dear old people long ago;  
Now the sod lies over faces that our eager lips  
have kissed—  
And Time has touched our heads and hearts  
with snow.  
O those fields of living green—  
Set the foaming seas between!  
No more we know the freshness of that shore!  
It is dear in memory yet,  
And our hearts shall not forget—  
For Irish hearts are warm hearts—the whole  
world oer.!

We're dreaming of a tiny plant that grows in  
Erin's Isle,—  
You could crush within the hollow of your hand  
Its tender little leaflet; but it's strong enough the  
while  
To bind the world about its native land!



O the Shamrock is, we hold,  
 As the good saint taught of old,  
 Of Deity the symbol fair and true!  
 And we'll wear it in our hearts  
 Until soul from body parts—  
 For Irish hearts are faithful hearts—the whole  
 world through!

We are sojourners and wanderers in every place  
 on earth,—  
 We are building up the Empire from afar;  
 But we brought our strength and spirit from the  
 country of our birth;  
 Its memory is our impulse and our star.  
 Let us show the world anew,  
 What the Irishman can do  
 In this fair land where now our lot is found;  
 Then the day shall not be made  
 When her soul shall stand afraid—  
 For Irish hearts are strong hearts, the whole  
 world round!



## When Spring is in the Hills

When Spring is in the hills—my Dear!  
 I wish her in the plain,—  
 But, when her buskined feet I've kissed,  
 And love's a flower in silver mist,  
 Divine dismay my spirit fills;—  
 Alas, the woe! Alas, the pain!  
 For I must wish her back again.

When Spring is on the plain—my Dear!  
 I wish her on the hills,—  
 For I must climb, and I must go—  
 If sweetheart Spring be far below  
 How shall the height be gain?—  
 Arise my heart and bear these ills—  
 Perchance the Quest—the Dream fulfills.

## The St. Francis River

(Early Spring)

The intimate arches of the dear grey trees,  
 Limned on the drifting background of the mist,  
 Stand like the delicate tracery of thought  
 That springs—how, none can wist—  
 Into cathedral mysteries in the soul,  
 Uplifting life to God, with roots in earth.  
 The circle of the enfolding hills still lies  
 Cloud-wrapped and chill, untouched by thought  
 of Spring,—  
 The unawakened slopes no paeans sing,  
 Though life has come to birth.

The river—poising like a resting dove,  
 Its grey and iridescent wings outspread  
 Across the low-lying fields, bears on its breast  
 The tears the sky has shed  
 Into far-shadowing vistas, curve on curve,  
 That hide all tears in tenderness and grey;  
 Ah, Me! the thoughts that reach adown the  
 years  
 Into such distances of soul and time—  
 That wrapped in mist and tenderness divine  
 Bear all our life away!

Dear Valley! sheltered in the quiet hills,  
 Lovely in floating mist or sheeted rain—  
 In many a land the wanderer's heart acclaims  
 Thy loveliness again—  
 And that far vision wakens in the heart  
 Undying memories that love can bring,



And freighted cares, borne on that tide's full  
breast,  
Slip like the river into sunset skies—  
Where, in the waiting Homeland shall arise  
The dawning of God's Spring.



## O Holy Flag

O, God in Heaven! Who madest man on earth!  
At Thy command the Nations had their birth!  
When Thou didst call the Islands and the Sea—  
Lord God of Hosts!—Brittania answered Thee!  
Her races are Thine own—a sword to keep  
Thy path on land, Thy way along the deep.

### *Refrain:*

O, Holy Flag!—The Empire's splendid shield!  
The pledge of faith that may not faint nor yield!  
By this great sign, through all the days to be,  
Lord God of Hosts—the Empire answers Thee!

Above the earth her sheltering cross is spread!  
In every land her trumpets wake the dead!  
Through darkness her great banner shines afar  
Of Freedom's glorious day the morning star!  
O, God! be still her guide that she may stand  
Her majesty Thine Own on sea and land!

### *Refrain:*

O, Holy Flag!—The Empire's splendid shield!  
The pledge of faith that may not faint nor yield!  
By this great sign, through all the days to be,  
Lord God of Hosts—the Empire answers Thee!

## "The Good Night"

The low horizon softly glows  
Dill blue, faint gold and palest rose,—  
And misty grey, and steely white  
The river lifts its face to night;  
Its darkened shores curve far away  
To clasp the fast departing day,  
While near at hand brown trees are seen  
A-foam with spring's ethereal green.

So might the falling radiance light  
The ether from a seraph's flight,—  
The glory of a passing wing,  
Make chords of colour glow and ring!

The little shadows run to hide  
Where valley arms are open wide  
And leave their trailing robes and creep  
Close to the hill's green breast to sleep.  
Like flowers the light and colour close  
And blend until the soft dusk knows  
That day is done, since clear and far  
Shines God's "Good Night"—the Evening  
Star!





## Awakening

April sleeps in a dream of flowers!  
The bird's heart and the brook's heart break!  
Has she woven a shroud? Will her sweetness  
wake  
To the bride—veil snow of the petal showers?

Ah, cold and sweet! She has nothing to give—  
Yet, in the heart of her coldness blows  
Arbutus breathing in pearl and rose  
The exquisite soul that shall love and live.

A-dream of heaven the pastures lie!  
The little pools in the wet, green sedge  
Are blue with heaven,—and life's on the edge  
Of the dream's blue and the thought of the sky.



## The Dreamers

We are the Dreamers, bid us then good speed!  
For we are one with men—and feel the need  
The agony of earth, yet move apart  
To count unchecked the beating of its heart.  
They hear not well who stand too near the strife!  
They miss the soul, who look alone on life!  
Who finds the meaning seeks by darkened ways:  
Who holds the dream must strive through weary  
days  
To win the right to dream. Alone they trod,  
Who loved and toiled and dreamed—and so  
found God.

The world is moved by us, because we see  
Clear-eyed the secrets of futurity,  
The Everlasting Truth, and seeing, know  
That near or far, the Truth alone shall grow!

We bring the vision that the prophets gave,  
The unseen glory, mighty still to save,  
Won by our pain,—in desolation born;  
We take the trembling promise of the morn,  
To fling star-like across the uncertain way  
A splendid presage of Immortal Day!

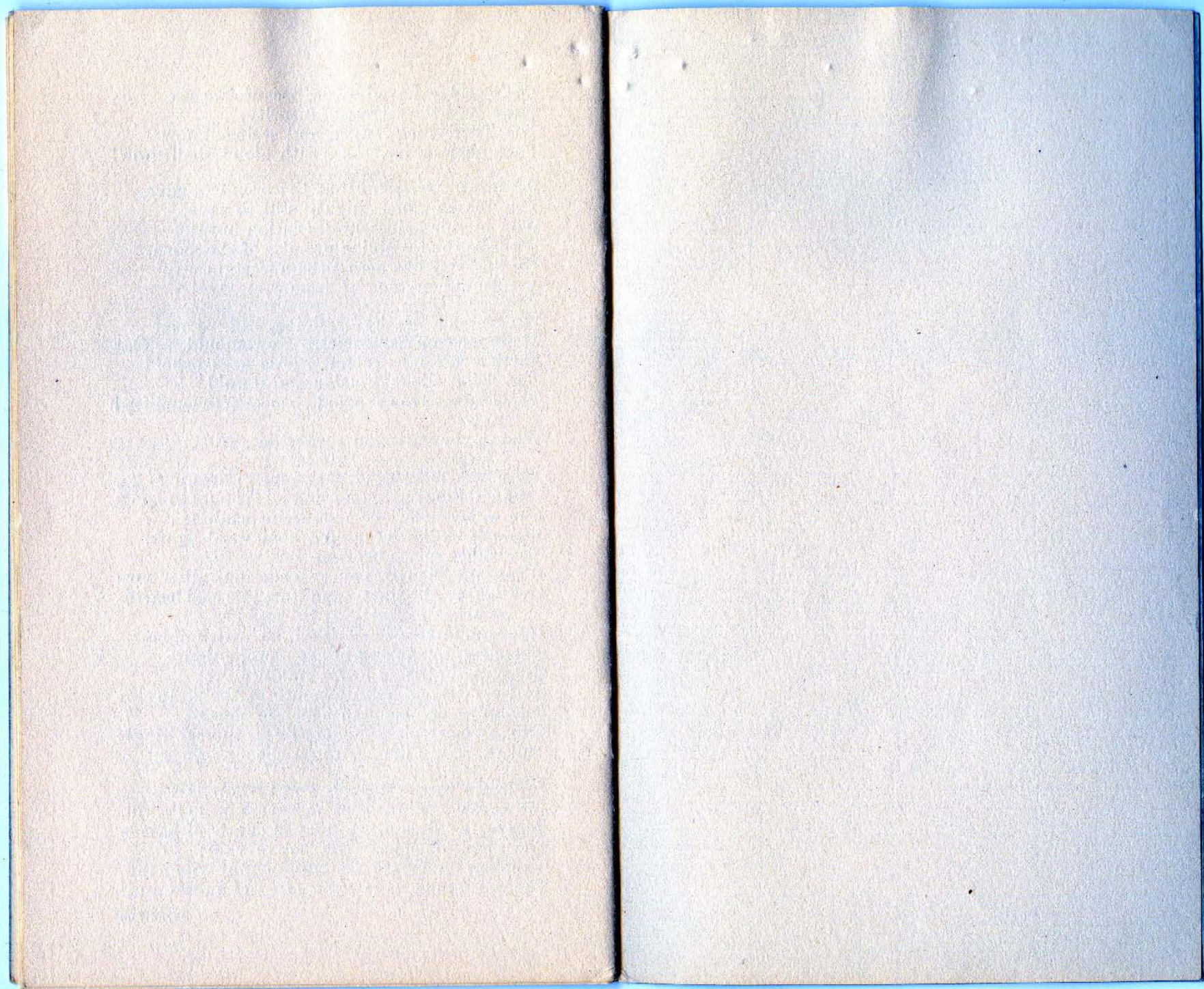
We conquer Death! for, dying, still we hear  
The unspoken harmonies. How should we fear  
Earth's futile tyrannies, whose eyes behold  
The rising Glory broaden and unfold?  
They bow, strong-souled, beneath the uplifted  
rod—  
Who in the dark and silence pass to God!

We climb the rugged peaks where dreamers go,  
Commanding space and time! 'Tis ours to know  
The isolation of the mountain heights:  
Beneath us lie the happy, homeward lights,  
The ruddy solace beckons, but we turn  
Where on High-Heaven's mysterious altar burn  
Her lights—the stars—and from this cold hearth-  
stone,

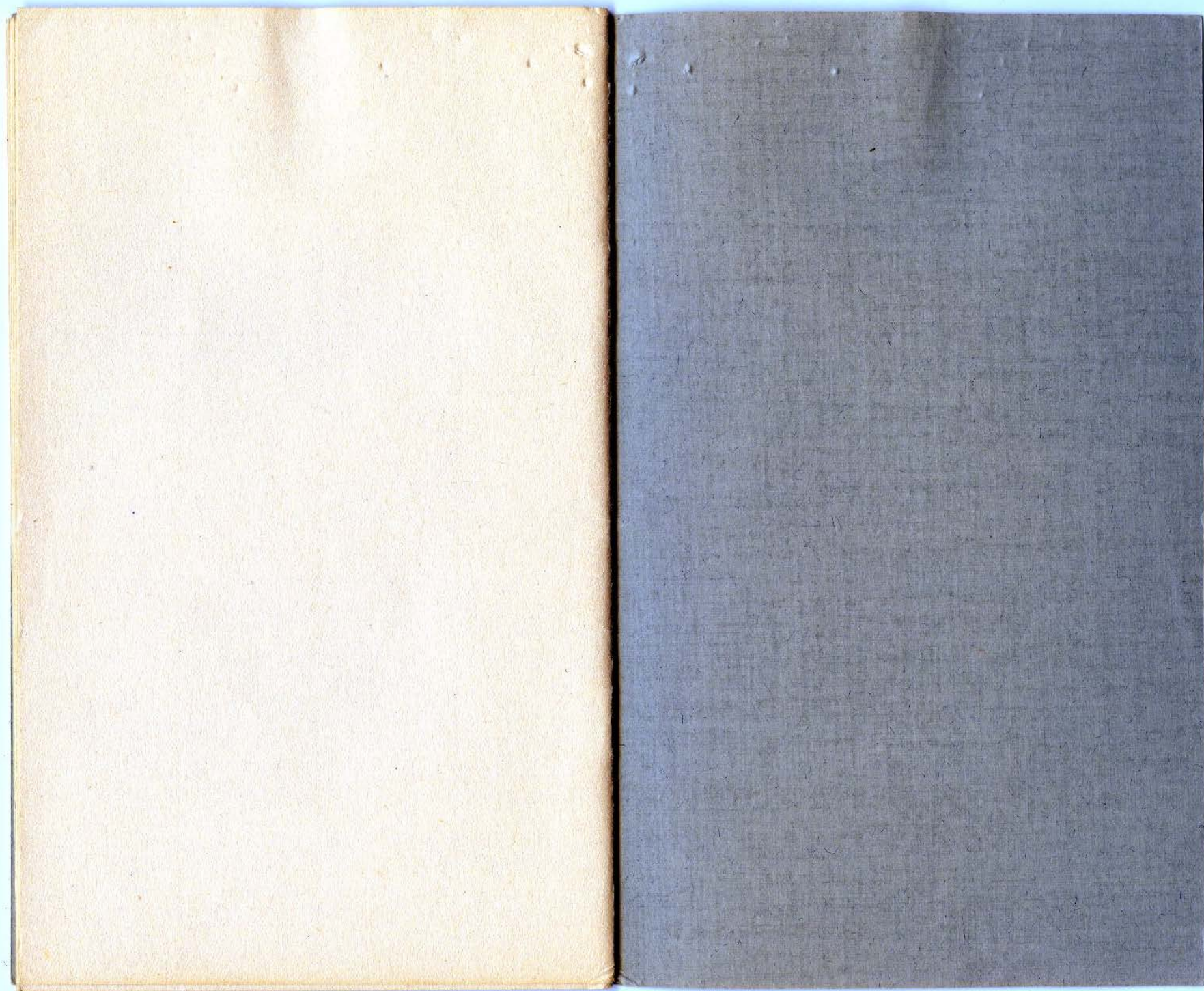
Wrought in creation's dawn, we watch alone  
The slow upreaching of the world's desire  
Glow in the rising day's majestic fire—  
And see Love's holy influence in the strange  
Solemnity of moonlight—in the change  
That give earth's common things ethereal wings;  
And sparkling life to frozen silence brings.

So dream we—while the world below is still,—  
We watch—and it sleeps on,—such is God's will.  
Because we dream, we bear the cross of pain—  
The royal loneliness—yet not in vain;  
Although unmarked we pass—by our command,  
The world shall wake—behold—and understand!











Page Printing &  
Binding Company  
Sturbridge Que.